

**For Immediate Release**

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**Magic News**

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### **'Toughest' Practice Room To Heat Up In Wrestle-Offs**

The month of December will see the wrestling squad completing the open tournament portion of their schedule, completing the semester in the classroom, and celebrating Christmas. Well, hopefully not celebrating too much.

"Hopefully I won't eat too many cookies," said **Kyle Foley** (Oakville.) "My sister makes real good cookies. Goopy butter is my favorite."

The break, and rest, come at an opportune time for the weary warriors, who have been facing NCAA Division I competition in open tournaments for six weeks. The time off should rejuvenate the Magic for the stretch run since they actually started their season with conditioning in September and daily practices from Oct. 1 on.

"These guys' bodies' think the season's over because they're used to going (in high school) November, December, January, February - so that break actually comes at a good time and a lot of it is to get them to mentally refocus, coming back with their weight down," said volunteer assistant coach **David Mirikitani**.

The relatively slow December will wrap up the second phase of a season that coach Mirikitani breaks into three parts for the wrestlers.

"It's what Coach Dave calls the third part of the season," said Foley referring to after Christmas break. "First part of the season we go to Div. I schools. Second part of the season is Thanksgiving break and a few practices and Wisconsin-Parkside. National Duals is the beginning of the third part of what Dave talks about. That's when we have to really kick it up a notch."

However, all may not be too calm during the holiday season. The Meramec practice room is known for its intensity and a place where champions are born. And, this year, with a plethora of talent, the room has become a hotspot for all-out wrestling wars.

"This practice room has been one of the hardest practice rooms I've ever been in and I'm glad it's that way.," said **Donald Woods** (McCluer North.) "We got a group of people who are good at different things so they help me with stuff I'm not good at. I've got a lot of people I can ask for help and that's good in a practice room."

The room will also turn it up a notch with upcoming wrestle-offs, where grapplers of the same weight class will compete against one another for the starting spot in dual meets beginning in January. In dual meets, only one grappler from each weight class may compete as opposed to open tournaments where several in the same weight class, same team, can wrestle.

"I think a lot of people on the internet are already speculating on who's going to be starting at what weight," said David Mirikitani. "We have a lot of depth this year. We already told the guys we'll take more than just 10 guys to the national duals for sure."

Despite a partial line up as grapplers heal for the next stretch, the Magic did capture three medals at the University of Wisconsin - Parkside Open Dec. 1. **Deron Winn** (Liberty) won a championship medal at 184 pounds. **Jamelle Jones** (Dover, DE) took home a second place medal at 197 pounds, and **Donald Woods** won a fifth place finish at 165 pounds. But, the focus seems to keep bouncing back to one particular tournament.

"The big day that we're all studying for is nationals," said Foley. "The national tournament, that's when it counts. All those tournaments, all those practices before count when you're at the national tournament."

### **Soccer's Thomas Named NJCAA All-American**

Following a stellar freshman campaign, **Meghan Thomas** (Kennedy) has been named an NJCAA second team All-American. The forward was the scoring leader for coach Jeff Karl's 11-5-1 Magic this past fall, scoring 11 goals and contributing 9 assists.

One of her many big goals was a score against nationally ranked Johnson County Sept. 15 that led to a 1-0 Meramec win. Coach Karl said later that the victory would stand among the top five in his career.

Thomas stepped up as a major scoring threat following the early season loss of **Michelle Spencer** (Notre Dame) to a knee injury.

### **Women's Basketball Squad Captures Oakton Title**

The women's basketball team enters December on a roll, winning their third straight game and a championship at the Oakton Invitational in Chicago Dec. 1. The Magic upended host Oakton in the title game 56-44 behind 11 points by **Capri Savage** (Orofino, ID) and 10 points by freshman center **Cynthia Abernathy** (Wentzville-Timberland.) Abernathy and sophomore forward **Michelle Senf** (Mehlville) were named to the All-Tournament team.

The Magic, who evened their season mark at 5-5 with the win, earned the title game berth by downing Kennedy King the night before 67-41. In that game, Abernathy had 12 points.

A 69-57 win over the McKendree JV team Nov. 28 started the three game roll. The team had been battling a bad case of roster attrition, caused by both injuries and illnesses, playing a pair of games with just seven total available players.

They'll be back in action on Wednesday, Dec. 5 hosting Lewis and Clark in a 5:30 tipoff. The Trailblazers defeated a thin Magic team 69-30 two weeks ago.

### **Men's Hoops Team Blows Out Moraine Valley 74-41**

Ending November on a high note, the men's basketball team dusted off Moraine Valley 74-41 Friday night (Nov. 30.) The game had been close until midway through the second half. Shot after shot rimmed and

rolled out of the hoop for a pressing Magic team during the first half, which ended with a 25-17 Meramec lead.

“We had a lot of opportunities around the basket in the first half,” said Coach **Randy Albrecht**. “Sometimes it’s a contagious thing with the whole team - you get a lot of shots five, six feet away and you just can’t bury them. We really felt we should have walked off with a bigger halftime lead.”

In the second half the Magic slowly started to pull away as a frustrated Moraine player was whistled for a technical foul. Before those free throws could be shot, Moraine head coach Dedrick Shannon was also cited for a technical foul for unsportsmanlike conduct. As play continued in the final minutes, so did the elbows and tempers of the Moraine Valley players as the Magic lead was beyond reach.

“For a team that lost six in a row, I think they came unglued at that point,” said Albrecht. “I was glad that my players, as the game got real rough at the end, kept their composure. It’s not fun to play if you know the other team’s going to whack you every time you get the ball.”

At one point, the Moraine Valley players walked toward their bench at Coach Shannon’s instruction and momentarily quit with several minutes left and a live ball with Meramec in possession. The team returned to play only after a referee’s warning that their actions could result in a serious suspension from future play.

Sophomore forward **Stan Crawford** (Hazelwood Central) had a big night, leading the scoring with 18 points. “Super sub” **Eddie White** (Parkway West) came off the bench to score 11 points (all off free throws) along with nine rebounds and four steals. Center **Bill Brandenburg** (Kirkwood) had 10 points while **Jake Prosser** (Francis Howell North) scored nine points.

Guard **Brandon Crites** (Hallsville) had eight points. Forward/center **Clay Zerr** had seven rebounds and six points.

The Magic will host Lewis and Clark at 7:30 Wednesday (Dec. 5), a team they beat 46-44 on a Jake Prosser three point swish at the buzzer Nov. 20.

### **Kirkwood Mayor Honors Albrecht For 600<sup>th</sup> Meramec Victory**

When the Magic defeated Harper College 77-65 on Nov. 17, it was the six hundredth career win at Meramec for head coach **Randy Albrecht** during his 31 years on Big Bend Boulevard. Prior to the Nov. 30 game versus Moraine Valley, a surprised Albrecht was recognized for his achievement.

Special guest, Kirkwood Mayor **Michael Swoboda** presented a special mayoral proclamation to Albrecht, proclaiming Dec. 1 as “Randy Albrecht Day” in the City of Kirkwood. Albrecht was accompanied by his wife, Linda, during the ceremony.

Also, a green and gold banner commemorating Albrecht’s 600 Meramec wins was unveiled underneath the south wall scoreboard. The banner will hang for the remainder of this season in recognition.

### **2008 Magic Hall Of Fame Inductees Kelley, Warriors Find Mid-Season Championship ‘Spark’**

Two All-American awards, two legendary coaches, and one national championship - more than any soccer player could even dream for in his career. But, that dream turned to reality for **Mike Kelley** at Meramec in 1975 and 1976. Kelley will enter the Magic Hall Of Fame next April.

Kelley, who played for coaches **Jack Writer** and **Pat McBride**, won a rare freshman year All-American honor (under Writer) and was prepared to leave Meramec after one year to follow his older brother to Indiana University. Staying a Warrior for his sophomore year with new coach Pat McBride may have been the smartest call of his life.

“It was probably the best year I ever had playing soccer,” said Kelley. “I had the most fun, learned the most, it was just an incredible year. It was just that he (McBride) cared so much. I think that he brought that everyday to practice. It was a lot of fun in practice.”

And, it was a lot of fun in that special, championship season of 1976. But it didn’t start out as fun when the season got off to a slow start.

“At one point we were so far down, 5-4-1, it was like we were going nowhere. Pat and I had a talk about what we were doing. And just talked about how we needed to arrange the team. We hit the right combination and never looked back. We ended up winning 12 in a row. ”

Part of that right combination was a gamble in moving Kelley from the sweeper position, where he was a freshman All-American, to the midfielder/striker spot to add offense. Even though the move came seven games into the year, Kelley still scored 14 goals and had 13 assists

“We went up to the East Coast early in the year and got thumped by Mercer County 6-3, it wasn’t pretty,” said Kelley. “I think we tied another game, it just didn’t look good. It was one of those years that early on it looked like we were doing nothing, and then, all of a sudden, there was a spark and we couldn’t lose anymore.”

That spark turned into an explosion as Meramec roared into the national championship game against Mercer County - the same team that earlier in the season had pounded the Warriors. Mercer was a perfect 23-0 heading into the game, but 90 game minutes later Mercer would have its first defeat, 3-2, and Meramec its second national men’s soccer title in five years.

“I still remember just about everything about that tournament, said Kelley of the Miami-based nationals. “It was the highlight of my soccer career.”

Kelley went back to the sweeper position and played his final two seasons at SIU-Edwardsville, earning All-American honors as a senior and two trips to the Div. II national tournament. He earned a Bachelor’s Degree with a double major in math and computer science. Kelley currently works in Salt Lake City, Utah as a database administrator manager. He is married and has two sons.

Some 31 years later, the Meramec soccer team still holds an indelible memory for Kelley. “It was just a pretty special couple of years,” he said.

### **‘Opposite’ Catcher Lilledahl Scherer Finds Stride To Hall**

**Juliet Lilledahl Scherer** destroyed the stereotype of catchers during her two years on the Meramec softball team in 1993 and ‘94. Instead of a hulking wide-body typically found behind the dish, Lilledahl Scherer was a 120 pound svelte, speedy catcher who could be found backing up plays at every base, as well as swiping bases (40 of 41 attempts in ‘94.)

“It allowed me to play the game differently,” said the newest Magic Hall Of Fame inductee. “We shut down running games pretty effectively. I backed up every play that wasn’t coming to home plate. We just had a very quick infield and it caught a lot of teams off guard.”

The Lindbergh High grad was recruited to Meramec by former Flyers teammate Melanie Flowers-Ruiz (2006 inductee Magic Hall Of Fame), who was a year older and had just finished her freshman year under coach Celeste Knierim. Lilledahl Scherer was part of a high-caliber team being assembled to challenge for a national title, but which would eventually have to settle for a fourth place finish.

"It bothered me for a very long time knowing that she had recruited that team knowing we had the pieces in place to win the tournament and we couldn't get it done," said Lilledahl Scherer. "It didn't get done for a variety of reasons - we had a pitching issue, we had a key injury at third base, we had a blown call that really cost us one game that sent us into the loser's bracket."

However, the 40-17 year had plenty of happy moments. One that will always stand out for Lilledahl Scherer was the ending of the Region XVI championship game against nemesis Crowder College that got the team to the junior college "big dance."

"We brought in a lefty, Heather Williams, I was catching. We just had the batter's number - it was a critical out, it was the last out of the game, and they had runners in scoring position," recalled Lilledahl Scherer. "That was the game that was going to send us to the national tournament and the path to our dream. It was a hard fought game; it took everything that we had to better that team. I remember catching the last pitch; it was a change up low in the dirt and kind of just running out to the pitcher's mound. It was a nice celebration."

Also nice was the team's 41-16 mark a year later, even though it did not qualify the Warriors for the national tourney. Lilledahl Scherer was busy on the field and in the classroom as a sophomore, earning Academic All-American honors before moving onto NCAA Div. I Bradley University for the next two years. Her unorthodox catcher's speed found her not only playing softball, but being one of the top runners on the cross country team.

Following a B.S. Degree in Special Education, she moved on to Purdue University to earn a Master's Degree in Literacy and Language. Lilledahl Scherer then returned to the college where she had so much success as an instructor of English in 1999. She is currently an Associate Professor in Meramec's English Department. And, along with her husband Terry, she is a proud parent of three children, including 18 month old twins.

She holds a deep commitment to Meramec athletics, attending at least one contest a season of athletes in her classes and is the embodiment of the success of a student-athlete.

"I owe so much to the athletic department for my personal athletic, and academic successes in life," said Lilledahl Scherer. "That's where I got my start. That program is near and dear to my heart. I know they do things the right way."

### **Simple 'Wow' Sums Up Scharnhorst's Softball Years**

**Angie Scharnhorst** has no difficulty in summing up her two years of playing softball at Meramec in the mid-1990's in a single word - "wow". That exclamatory was the first, and only word, that came to the newest Magic Hall Of Fame inductee's mind when asked of her Meramec years.

"I just remember looking back and thinking 'wow, a little girl from St. Charles, Missouri playing college ball at Meramec and going to the World Series and going on to Division I and going to their World Series,' that was just a fun ride, said Scharnhorst.

And Scharnhorst wowed plenty of people during her softball career in 1995 and '96 at Meramec, and later at the University of Texas. The Francis Howell North graduate was a catcher who was a feared hitter as

well, batting .394 as a freshman and .464 her sophomore year. Both seasons she was an NJCAA All-American.

"I have never been a part of such close teams. It was never a chore or a task, everyone loved playing softball and we worked the field and we stayed late and we went down to Vickie's batting cage," said Scharnhorst. "I've never been such a part of an actual team like the one at Meramec, it was just the camaraderie of the team."

They were not only fun teams, but they were winning teams. The '95 squad went 42-16 and finished fifth at the national tournament. The '96 Warriors were a stellar 47-11, taking home a third place trophy at the Junior College World Series. As a junior, she reached lofty heights, playing for NCAA Division I Texas. It was that experience that made her realize why Meramec would always be so important to her.

"The thing that made us such a good team and just close was that we really worked for everything we had," she said. "I went on to play at Texas and it was wonderful and amazing but we were given a lot of things. At Meramec you really had to work for it and you took pride in it."

The blue collar values taught at Meramec became apparent to Scharnhorst in later years as she reflected upon simple things such as how the team made it to road games.

"We would take two vans and we would drive for hours and just be squeezed in these vans, we had our equipment with us. But I think that's what got us close because we had to spend that time together and we were always around each other. That, in turn, helped us on the field that we actually really knew each other well," she said.

Scharnhorst would also go on to play as part of a national junior college all-star team in the Canada Cup against faraway nations before heading to the Lone Star State. In her first season in Austin, she would find herself in the NCAA World Series - three consecutive seasons in a collegiate national championship tournament.

"We were the youngest program to ever go to the World Series because it was the second year of the program. We were definitely the deer in the headlights," said Scharnhorst. "We were definitely that team 'wow, we're just excited to be here!'"

But, Scharnhorst was also excited to be at Meramec because of her multi-hall of fame coaches Celeste Knierim and Vickie Schneider.

"Not only was Celeste a great coach, her and Vickie both were just wonderful at helping us grow as young females. Vickie always said we could never say 'what?', like if we didn't understand a question we couldn't say 'what' or 'huh?'. We had to say 'excuse me', we had to be adults and speak properly."

Following graduation at Texas with a Bachelor's Degree in Sport Management, Scharnhorst has remained in Austin and works as an event coordinator at the Austin Convention Center. Despite her newfound Texas roots, it was Meramec where her fondest memories will always lie with coaches Knierim and Schneider.

"They were fun and they knew how to have fun with us," she said. "There was just an amazing balance there at Meramec."